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THE MOSCOW TRIAL

BY MAX SHACHTMAN

UNLESS we are the "gullible idiots" who Trotsky says would have to people the world if the charges made against the sixteen men just tried and shot in Moscow, were to be believed, we must conclude that the very indictment and execution of Zinoviev, Kamenev and the fourteen others constitute in actuality the most crushing indictment yet made of the Stalin regime itself. The real accused in the trial were not on the defendants' bench before the Military Tribunal. They were and they remain the usurping masters of the Kremlin—concocters of a hideous frame-up.

The official indictment charges a widespread assassination conspiracy, carried on these five years or more, directed against the head of the Communist party and the government, organized with the direct connivance of the Hitler regime, and aimed at the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship in Russia. And who are included in these stupefying charges, either as direct participants or, what would be no less reprehensible, as persons with knowledge of the conspiracy who failed to disclose it?

Leon Trotsky, organizer and leader, together with Lenin, of the October Revolution, and founder of the Comintern.

Zinoviev: 35 years of his life in the Bolshevik party; Lenin's closest collaborator in exile and nominated by him as first chairman of the Communist International; chairman of the Petrograd Soviet for years; member of the Central Committee and the Political Bureau of the C.P. for years.

Kamenev: also 35 years spent in the Bolshivik party; chairman of the Political Bureau in Lenin's absence; chairman of the Moscow Soviet; chairman of the Council of Labor and Defense; Lenin's literary executor.

Smirnov: head of the famous Fifth Army during the civil war; called the "Lenin of Siberia;" a member of the Bolshevik party for decades.

Yevdokimov: official party orator at Lenin's funeral; leader of the Leningrad party organization for many years; member of the Central Committee at the time Kirov died.

Ter-Vaganian: theoretical leader of the Armenian communists; founder and first editor of the party's scientific review, "Under the Banner of Marxism."

Mrachkovsky: defender of Ekaterinoslav from the interventionist Czechs and the White troops during the civil war.

Bakayev: old Bolshevik leader in Moscow; member of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission during Lenin's time.

Sokolnikov: Soviet ambassador to England; creator of the "chervonetz," the first stable Soviet currency.

Tomsky: head of the Russian trade union center for years; old worker-Bolshevik; member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau for years.

Rykov: old Bolshevik leader; Lenin's successor as chairman of the Council of People's Commissars.

Serebriakov: Stalin's precedessor in the post of secretary of the C.P.

Bukharin: for years one of the most prominent theoreticians of the Bolsheviks; chairman of the Comintern after Zinoviev; editor of official government organ, "ISVESTIA" to this day.

Kotsubinsky: one of the main founders of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

General Schmidt; head of one of the first Red Cavalry brigades in the Ukraine and one of the country's liberators from the White forces.

Other heroes of the Civil War, like General Putna, military attache till yesterday of the Soviet Embassy in London; Gertik and Gaevsky; Shaposhnikov, director of the Academy of the General Staff; Klian Kliavin.

Heads of banking institutions; chiefs of industrial trusts; heads of educational and scientific institutions; party secretaries from one end of the land to the other; authors (Selivanovsky, Serebriakova, Katayev, Friedland, Tarassov-Rodionov); editors of party papers; high government officials (Prof. Joseph Lieberberg, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Jewish Autonomous Republic of Biro-Bijan; etc., etc.

Accusation Constitutes Admission by Bureaucracy

Now, to charge, as has been done, all these men and

women, plus hundreds and perhaps thousands of others, with having engaged to one extent or another, in an assassination plot, is equivalent, at the very outset and on the face of the matter, to an involuntary admission by the accusing bureaucracy.

1. That its much-vaunted popularity and the universality of its support among the population, is fantastically exaggerated.

2. That it has created such a regime in the party and the country as a whole, that the very creators of the Bolshevik party and revolution, its most notable and valiant defenders in the crucial and decisive early years, could find no normal way of expressing their dissatisfaction or opposition to the ruling bureaucracy and found that the only way of fighting the latter was the way chosen, for example, by the Nihilists in their struggle against Czarist despotism, namely, conspiracy and individual terrorism.

3. That the "classless socialist society irrevocably" established by Stalin is so inferior to Fascist barbarism on the political, economic and cultural fields, that hundreds of men whose whole lives were prominently devoted to the cause of the proletariat and its emancipation, decided to discard everything achieved by 19 years of the Russian Revolution in favor of a Nazi regime.

4. And, not least of all, that the Russian Revolution was organized and led by an unscrupulous and perfidious band of swindlers, liars, scoundrels, mad dogs and assassins. Or, more correctly, if these were not their characteristic in 1917 and the years immediately thereafter, then there was something about the gifted and beloved leadership of Stalinism that reduced erstwhile revolutionists and men of probity and integrity to the level of swindlers, liars, scoundrels, mad dogs and assassins.

These are the outstanding counts in the self-indictment of the bureaucracy. To them must be added the charge of a clumsy and cynical frame-up. Even a casual examination of the very carefully edited record of the trial that has thus far been made public, so thoroughly reveals its trumped-up, staged nature, as to deprive all the avidly made "confessions" of so much as an ounce of validity.

Contradictions in Testimony

Considerations of space prevent a detailed listing of the multiplicity of contradictions with which the published slabs of testimony fairly bristle. But the following facts and conclusions, briefly stated, are both inescapable and unassailable:

As is known by everyone who is at all acquainted with the inner-party fight in the Soviet Union, Trotsky broke off all political, organizational and personal relations with Zinoviev, Kamenev and their followers early in 1928, when the latter capitulated to Stalin, whereas Trotsky and his partisans were exiled or imprisoned. For the last eight years Trotsky's dissociation from the Zinovievist capitulators, who were followed by such "Trotskyist" capitulators as Ter-Vaganian, Smirnov, Serebriakov, Mrachkovsky, etc., has been publicly and privately stated by him not once but a hundred times. Talk of a "Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc" is undiluted fantasy.

Unless Trotsky is an imbecile and a rank amateur to boot—about the only names the Stalinists have not yet called him!—it is ludicrous and inconceivable to believe that this "main organizer of the assassinations" would choose as his instruments and agents for so highly conspiratorial a job, men whom, it is officially stated, he saw just once or not at all, men whom **nobody** ever heard of until a month ago or who are, at most, chance or obscure figures—Olberg, Holtsman, Lurye, David, Yurin.

It would be a sheer affront to the intelligence to ask one to believe that after four to five years of intensive activity, men of the intellectual and organizational calibre of these old Bolsheviks, with their years of conspirative experience under Czarism, having at their command a widespread illegal apparatus that penetrated into the highest circles, composed of men having daily access to the "intended victims," aided and abetted by the whole of Hitler's machinery, disposing of the services of such men as Bakayev (described by Prosecutor Vishinsky "as a resolute man, persevering and persistent, with a very strong will, strong character and stamina, who would not stop at anything to achieve the aims which he had set himself"), could not succeed, with all this and in all this time, in accomplishing anything more than the assassination of one person, Kirov.

Equally preposterous is the assumption that would have to be made that the G.P.U., the most efficient police and espionage agency in history, required at least four years to unearth a conspiracy in which at least hundreds were involved, among them men who acted as freely, loosely and vocally during the years of the plot itself as they did during the trial, and whose directors appear to have been less careful in their choice of collaborators and agents than the average person is in his choice ot toothpicks. Anyone who happened along was promptly told about the "plot" and invited to join in. Also, apparently, everyone who **was** told of this "plot"—its "Fascist connections" included!—**did** join in! Either the G.P.U. is composed, from top to bottom, of the most incompetent muttonheads that ever disgraced the role of a Praetorian Guard, or else Stalin takes it for granted that the rest of the world is composed of persons no less muttonheaded, but ten times as credulous.

Reason for "Confession"

But why **did they confess?** We do not refer here to the all too obvious G.P.U. agents like Olberg and his ilk, but to defendants like Zinoviev and Kamenev. There is, to our minds, only one logical explanation which, while it is not flattering to the moral stamina of the accused, is a thousand times more discreditable to the bureaucracy which framed the whole affair.

1. Of the hundreds and perhaps thousands arrested for the purposes of the trial, it is significant that only a small handful were found who could be prevailed upon to make the "confessions" that fell in so neatly with every charge of the prosecution. **Every single one of them** (the G.P.U. provocateurs excepted) **was a capitulator,** who had once, twice and three times in the past signed whatever statement was dictated to him by Stalin. Not **one** of the thousands of unbending, non-capitulating "Trotskyists" imprisoned in the Soviet Union was brought to the trial.

2. They were all assured of having their lives spared if they "confessed" what they were told to confess and, above all, if they implicated Trotsky. This is as clear as day from the following: (a) although every defendant ended his closing remarks with the vociferous declaration —I deserve no mercy, I ask no mercy, I deserve to be shot as a mad Fascist dog—(as they agreed in the bargain to declare), they all nevertheless made a formal appeal for clemency the very night (August 24) that the trial ended (again as unmistakably agreed upon in the original bargain), an appeal which the Praesidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union just as formally announced on August 25 that it had turned down. (b) not a single "outsider" was allowed to attend the execution itself, at which the frightful double-cross was consummated, out of obivious fear of the last-minute revelations that the disillusioned victims of the frame-up would shout out. (c) not even the legally customary 72 hours between sentence and execution

were allowed the sixteen, out of the same fear, namely, that they might have time to get the truth of the affair to the outside world.

"Confessions" in Previous Trials

3. Let us remember the "Menshevik trial" of 1931, where "confessions" were made just as freely and zealously, about "conspirative meetings" in the Soviet Union with Rafael Abramovich, who was able to prove to the hilt that he was 1,000 miles away at the time, and about the receipt of "counter-revolutionary funds" from a Russian emigre in Paris who—alas for the "confession"!—was proved to have died some years prior to his alleged contributions of money. Remember also the subsequent statement smuggled out of the Soviet prison by one of the ardent "confessors," Sukhanov, who related how all the perfervid "avowals of guilt" had been framed and **actually** rehearsed in advance of the formal trial. Compare these facts with the "confession," for example, of Holtsman, who said he had met Trotsky in 1932 in the Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen— a hotel which the Danish press subsequently proved to have been torn down in **1917** and rebuilt only in the middle of 1936! This bit of "Confession" alone gives the full measure of the trial.

4. Within the confines of the secret bargain, some of the defendants nevertheless tried their best to convey to the world the fraudulent character of their "confessions" by such exaggeratedly abject humility and acquiescence in the most outrageous charges, as could only lead to the conclusion that they were burlesquing the whole affair. Here is a characteristic example:

"Vishinsky: What appraisel should be given the articles and statements you wrote in 1933, in which you expressed loyalty to the party? Deception?

"Kamenev: No, worse than deception.

"Vishinsky: Perfidy?

"Kamenev: Worse!

"Vishinsky: Worse than deception; worse than perfidy —do you find the word to be Treason?

"Kamenev: You have found the world.

"Vishinsky: Accused Zinoviev, do you confirm this?

"Zinoviev: Yes."

Unless the trial took place on some distant planet, peopled by unimaginable creature, such replies to a prosecutor can be construed only as an attempt, however inadequate from a revolutionary standpoint, to tell the world that **none** of the utterances of the defendants is to be taken seriously or at face value.

Reasons for Trial

Now, why did Stalin need this trial and its horrifying conclusion? Why did the "most stable" and "most popular" and "most democratic" government in the world, in the 19th year of the Revolution, execute sixteen men, when even capitalist Britain sentenced to only one year of imprisonment a man caught with revolver in hand, a few weeks ago, in an attempted assassination of King Edward? Why this hideous culmination of a whole series of crimes by the Stalin bureaucracy, which puts it on a par with the Borgia? Here are, we believe, the reasons, stated summarily and not necessarily in the order of importance:

1. To distract the attention of the Soviet masses from the stirring events in Spain and from the catastrophic fiasco of the Stalinist "People's Front" policy practiced there.

2. To inform the world bourgeoisie or those among them with whom Stalin desperately seeks a military alliance, that Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev, who symbolize world revolution as contrasted with Stalin's nationalistic reactionism, are through for good and aye, that Stalin is worthy of the confidence of the bourgeoisie who need not be troubled with any fears of world revolution being tolerated by the Kremlin. A Boston paper gleefully and not incorrectly summarized the executions by writing that "the Third International has been stood up against the wall and shot."

3. To behead, by anticipation, "preventively" **any** possible experienced leadership for the growing movement against the stifling atmosphere of bureaucratic suppression and the growing caste divisions so sensationally manifested in the rise of a privileged bureaucracy and a "Stakhanovist" labor aristocracy.

4. To warn anybody and everybody, in the ranks or in the bureaucracy, that the slightest murmur of criticism, dissatisfaction or opposition to the Stalin dynasty can and will be dealt with easily and summarily by the simple device of labelling it "Trotskyist-Zinovievist assassination conspiracy" and shooting it out of existence. The executions were Stalin's way of prefacing the inauguration of the "democratic" constitution with the bullet punctuated warning: "Don't think that this constitution means that you are free to open your mouth or to vote for anyone you please. Just one un-Stalinist word or act and, fatally labelled, you go before the Military Tribunal."

C. P. Solicitude for S. P.

5. To discredit Trotsky and "Trotskyism" or, more accurately, those ideas of consistent revolutionary Marxism which are making their way among the class conscious vanguard everywhere, despite the poisons of reformist socialism and Stalinism. The C.P. press has already taken the cue, and has launched a savage campaign. The Trotskyists, says the "DAILY WORKER" (September 9) to the Socialist Party, "are trying to demoralize your party and to destroy it in order to prevent the unity of the working class. We communists do not want your party destroyed . . . ." The affectionate tenderness the Stalinists feel for the S.P. and the lengths to which they have always been ready to go in their anguished concern for its welfare, ought to bring tears to the cheeks of the most hardened; in any case, their notorious maternal interest in the S.P. obviates, if it doesn't defy, further comment. And when they urge, in the same breath, that the S.P. rid itself of the "alien forces in your midst" —they mean not merely the socalled Trotskyists, but every revolutionary and military socialist who refuses to take the current Stalinist policy of the "People's Front," of social-patriotism, of the "lesser evil," of holding the stirrup cup for Roosevelt, as good Marxian or good socialist coin. For this and kindred reasons, the Stalinists denounce Norman Thomas, Devere Allen and Clarence Senior as the "protector of assassins," with the same affectionate nonchalance that Browder and Co. use to denounce these comrades for being the "assistants of Hearst" because they think the S.P. ought to campaign for its own ticket instead of campaign in shamefaced whispers for Roosevelt.

It is not denunciation but congratulations that comrades Thomas, Allen and Senior merit for having done their elementary working class duty of sending cablegrams to protest the actions taken against Leon Trotsky. The demand for an objective, authoritative and trustworthy International Labor Commission before which Trotsky, as well as his traducers, may present evidence, should be pushed until it is a functioning reality. We have every reason to believe that its hearings would throw a glaring light upon the greatest frame-up and one of the greatest crimes ever committed.

An Interview with Leon Trotsky on the Recent Moscow Trial

"WHAT is involved is the life of many persons in the Soviet Union and my name as a political person. I have my views and I have always defended them. I now hold the same views as before. I am a revolutionist, but no terrorist. When Friedrich Adler shot the Austrian Prime Minister Stuerghk in 1916, I declared that my policy was not that of Adler, but that of Karl Liebknecht. Karl Liebknecht went into the streets of Berlin and distributed leaflets against the war. If I wanted to conceal my views, it would not have been necessary for me to go into emigration for the third time. But I am a revolutionist. If I were now able to travel to Spain, I would do so. I would fight for the revolution against the Fascist rebels—I say this openly and honestly. But I cannot travel to Spain and it is nonsense when it is now said that I have my hands in the affair that is now developing down there."

In this way the conversation is brought to the burning question of the day, the Moscow trial and the accusations directed at Trotsky, which he brands as the greatest frame-up the world has ever seen.

"Chronology," he continues, "plays an important role in what I am about to put before you. I therefore beg you to pay attention to the course of development of the affair. The G.P.U. knows many arts, but it has not mastered the art of scientific chronology. I came to Turkey in February 1929, after having been banished from the Soviet Union. And on March 4, 1929, I wrote the following in the Russian magazine, 'Bulletin of the Opposition,' which appeared in Paris in July of the same year:

"'Only one thing remains for Stalin: to attempt to draw a line of blood between the official party and the Opposition. It is an absolute necessity for him to connect up the Opposition with assassin's attacks, with the preparation of armed uprisings, etc. But that's just what the leaders of the Opposition stand in the way of. Thence the Stalin plan to send these leaders abroad (at that time preparations were being made for the banishment of several persons), in order thereby to gain a free hand with regard to the young supporters of the Opposition whose names are unknown to the broad masses, especially abroad. That is why it may be expected that, after the banishment of the leaders, Stalin will endeavor, in one way or another, to trick one or another allegedly oppositional group into an adventure, or in the event of a failure, to manufacture some "assassin's attempt" or a "military conspiracy" and blame the Opposition for it.'

"Everybody, no matter what party he may belong to, will grasp the great significance of this quotation. If you are able to read Russian, you can see from the 'Bulletin' —in which all my articles have been published for the last 7½ years—that I have always been an opponent of individual terror, but that I was already then clearly aware of what was coming.

Kirov Assassination Begins Frame-up

"The first 'attentat' to happen was the murder of Kirov in December 1934. Kirov was an administration man of only average talent. In my opinion he didn't have any political importance. After the murder, the government issued two declarations. At first it said that the 'attentat' had been committed by White terrorists who had come across the Soviet Russian border from Poland, Rumania and other countries. On December 17, it was suddenly announced that the murderer is the member of the Leningrad Opposition, Nikolaiev. Perhaps Nikolaiev really did belong to the Leningrad Opposition, but then only in 1926 and not in 1934. The last chapter of the Leningrad Opposition had closed in 1928.

"Two weeks after that, Zinoviev was drawn into the trial and, together with his supporters, accused of murder. Zinoviev worked together with me in the ranks of the party in the year 1926 and was regarded as an Oppositionist. When the bureaucracy strengthened itself in 1928, Zinoviev capitulated. And from 1929 to 1934, Zinoviev and Kamenev were counted as traitors to the Opposition—which can be seen with all desirable clarity from the Opposition's 'Bulletin.'

"When I heard that the two of them had been connected with the 'attentat,' I immediately said to myself that something exceptionally unusual must have happened. I had heard nothing of their having entered into opposition again. Meanwhile, I didn't doubt for a moment that they had absolutely nothing to do with the 'attentat.' The two of them were brought to trial in January 1935 and up to that time my name had not yet been connected with the affair. That occurred only in the indictment."

Trotsky got up and crossed the floor. He stopped in front of a bookshelf.

"Just look at these," he said, "my own books. Some of them are a bit scorched. That's due to the fire that broke out in our home in Constantinople. These books are the result of a literary activity of forty years and in all these books you will find that I have always been an opponent of individual terror—in the Soviet Union as well as in the rest of the world.

"I wasn't even accused in 1935, but only named. It was said that Nikolaiev had stated that before the 'attentat' he had been in contact with the consul of a foreign state. From this consul he had received 5,000 roubles for the carrying out of the attack, for which Nikolaiev was supposed to do the consul the service of getting a letter to Trotsky for him.

"Gentlemen, that is all that was said about me at that time in the indictment. But the judges neglected to go into any further details on this letter with Nikolaiev!

"When the consul was drawn in, all the other consuls protested and demanded that the name of this unworthy colleague be published. Thereupon, after a long delay, it was announced that his name is Skujeneck and that he is from Latvia. The Soviet government was asked if it would address a diplomatic note to Latvia, but it replied: No! The consul got away scot-free to Finland.

"He was certainly not acting as a consul at that time, but as a private individual. And I often asked myself: Why didn't they make sure to apprehend him? Why wasn't he brought before the court? Was it because he was, after all, an agent of the G.P.U.?

G. P. U. Responsible for Kirov's Murder

"It is my opinion that the 'attentat' against Kirov was arranged in order to extirpate the Opposition—But there was no intention of killing Kirov; the 'attentat' was to be prevented at the last minute. When things turned out differently than had been counted on, the head of the

G.P.U. in Leningrad, Medved, was made responsible for them. That was the third trial in connection with the 'attentat'!

"Medved and a few other officials of the G.P.U. were accused because they knew all about the 'attentat' but didn't do anything to prevent it. Medved confessed everything and received 3 years in prison.

"I know Medved. He was no independent politician—it was Stalin himself who directed this affair in order to hit the Opposition. To this day I do not know if Nikolaiev himself was an agent of the G.P.U. The fact that he succeeded in penetrating into Kirov's office—Kirov had a high post and it wasn't just anybody who could get access to him—would indicate that. In any case, Medved found Nikolaiev through his G.P.U. agents. Nikolaiev was a desperate young bureaucrat. What psychological factors drove him to murder, I don't know.

"But now began the persecutions of the Oppositionists. I wasn't wrong when I foresaw that that would happen. The trial that has just taken place is not a new trial, it is only a new edition of the trial of January 1935. At that time we had the general rehearsal. Now we have the premiere.

"For a year and half the affair was in preparation. And now I am not only the organizer of the 'attentat,' but, gentlemen, I am also in contact with the Gestapo! And this in spite of the fact that my name was only mentioned in passing in the indictment of 1935!

"So, I am supposed to be in contact with the Gestapo? And with so powerful an ally I am supposed to have achieved nothing but the murder of Kirov?

"Now there is an entirely new set of witnesses in the affair. A large part of their names I heard for the first time. I don't know them. As to the vanished consul, nothing more is heard of him altogether. These witnesses were dug up in the course of the past year and a half. But now I am abroad and I shall be able to produce hundreds of witnesses who will prove that I had nothing to do with the Kirov murder."

The correspondent asked: "It is asserted that you had a talk with Berman-Jurin in Copenhagen and Oslo with regard to the murder of Stalin and that you settled the matter between you."

"I left Turkey to visit Copenhagen" answered Trotsky, "for the purpose of lecturing to the Student's League. During my stay in Copenhagen, about 40 persons visited me. I remember all of them, but there was no Berman among them—unless he has meanwhile changed his name—or any other Russian citizen, for that matter. There was a Russian-speaking Lithuanian among those with whom I spoke.

Olberg an Agent of G. P. U.

"Among my papers, I have found the following facts. In 1930, a certain Olberg tried to come to me as my secretary. The then publisher of 'Die Aktion,' Franz Pfempfert, in a letter dated April 1, 1930, warned me in the most vigorous manner against Olberg as a suspicious creature, who was probably a G.P.U. agent. Since Olberg seems to be the basis of the whole accusation, I would gladly furnish the press with material that characterizes him. It is simply stupid to contend that I would have given any commissions of a terroristic nature to a man whom I myself do not know and against whom a good friend warned me.

"During my stay in Norway, I received not a single visit from the Soviet Union. Nor did I write a single line from here to the Soviet Union, neither directly nor indirectly. Until about two years ago, my wife was in contact with our son. He was at one time a professor in a technical high school. I do not know where he is now, but we learned quite by chance that he is supposed to have been exiled to Siberia. He never participated in politics, but it suffices that he is Trotsky's son. The letters we received from him until about twenty months ago, consisted exclusively of brief greetings, just as did the letter of my wife to him. She also tried to learn of his whereabouts through an Olso bank, but the Soviet authorities merely reported: Address unknown.

"Our other son, however, did participate in political life. In 1928 he followed us of his own free will to Central Asia and later to Turkey. He has just finished his studies at the Sorbonne University.

"In the telegram that Moscow has sent out about the trial, is reported a letter that I am supposed to have transmitted to Smirnov through my son. According to this letter, I am supposed to want three things, namely: 1) to eliminate Stalin and Voroschilov; 2) to organize cells in the army; and 3) to take advantage of all the mistakes committed in the event of war in order to seize the power.

"The whole letter consists of five lines! Five lines for those three tasks! That's really just a little bit too concentrated!

"The whole thing is a crude frame-up. It's a lie, an infamous lie that is directed at me. But there is no possibility of raising the voice of criticism in the Soviet Union. Criticism is strangled there and these senseless accusations will remain unassailed there for the time being. But here we do have the possibility of criticizing. And as for me, gentlemen, I criticize."

THE TRIALS AND EXECUTIONS IN MOSCOW

Eliminating the Opposition Under the New Constitution?

BY THEODORE DAN

We reprint the following letter sent to the editor of the MANCHESTER GUARDIAN by Theodore Dan, appearing in that publication on September 4, 1936. Dan is the leader of the Russian Menshevik (Social Democratic) party, and a member of the Bureau of the Socialist and Labor International. While we are not in accord with all the political views of Theodore Dan, his letter on the trial and executions in Moscow is, we feel, of signal interest to our readers. —The Editors.

To the Editor of the Manchester Guardian.

Sir,—Sixteen men have been shot in Moscow and one, Tomsky, menaced and hounded into suicide. Among the sixteen were Zinovieff, Kameneff, Smirnov, Mratchkovsky, the most noted of the fellow-workers of Lenin, co-founders of the Bolshevik party and the international Communist movement, men who led the Bolshevik revolution and during its heroic period filled the highest posts in the Soviet State and in the party and trade union organizations. The turn of other Bolshevik leaders no less prominent, men who have held high positions in the State and the army—Radek, Bukharin, Rykoff, Piatokoff, Sokolnikoff, Serebriakoff,—has still to come. Everyone who at any time played a leading part in the Bolshevik party is awaiting his fate in fear and horror. Even those nearest to Stalin feel insecure.

Stalin is not content even with having the old party leaders shot; he is having them covered with infamy—

and with them the leader who is now out of his reach, Trotsky, the actual organiser of the October rising, of the Red Army, and of the victories in the civil war. If one is to believe the court and the Soviet press, the men who were the making of the Bolshevik party and of international Communism, and who led the Bolshevik revolution, were nothing but blackguards and thieves, spies and mercenaries of Hitler and the Gestapo!

But did there really exist a terrorist conspiracy against Stalin among the old Bolshevik leaders? It is only too natural that terrorist ideas should simmer in many a hot head in a country in which every opportunity is lacking of organised peaceful opposition to the arbitrary "totalitarian" omnipotence of a single person. But one may well suspect that these hot heads would not be found on the shoulders of old and experienced politicians, who, as Marxists, had for many a year strongly condemned terrorism, if only on account of its futility. The suspicion becomes a certainty when one examines the case for the prosecution and the reports of the Soveit press on the proceedings. There is not a single document, not a single definite piece of evidence, not a single precise detail of the alleged plans of assassination, not a single attempt to reconcile the conflicting statements made, and only two "witnesses," both brought into court from prison and both due to appear themselves as defendants in the "second" terrorist trial before the same court! There is nothing but malevolent phrases in general terms and, most incredible of all, the most abject of self-vilification and "confessions" on the part of the accused men, once more without any concrete detail of any sort concerning their "crime"; they fairly enter into competition with the State prosecutor in branding themselves, and actually beg for the death penalty.

But why is Stalin thus getting rid of the old party leaders on the very eve of the enactment of the new Constitution, with all its democratic flavour? Why is he breaking, at this particular moment, the bonds that still unite him with the old traditions and the past history of the Bolshevik party, the international Communist movement, and the Bolshevik revolution, as Napoleon once broke with the Jacobins from among whom he had risen to power?

In spite of all the democratic rights granted to Soviet citizens by the new Constitution Stalin intends to be in a position to make it a serviceable instrument of the consolidation of his personal dictatorship. For there is one right that is still denied the Soviet citizen—the right of free political self-determination and free organisation in general, without which all other rights can easily be rendered valueless. The political monopoly and the leadership in all permitted organisations and all State and municipal bodies, and therewith the disposal of the press, of the right of assembly, and so on, remains in the hands of the Communist party which Stalin has politically emasculated; in other words, it remains constitutionally reserved to Stalin himself.

But he still has to face the danger that certain provisions of the new Constitution, above all, the secrecy of the ballot, may become buttresses for a legal struggle of the working masses for their rights—above all, for the right of free organisation. For that reason he is urgently at work now making "innocuous" all those who are in a position to organise this mass struggle. He is sending Social Democrats wholesale into his concentration camps. And he is hurriedly exterminating the last of the old Bolshevik leaders whose names and whose opposition to him are known to the masses and who could thus become particularly dangerous to him in his peaceful and constitutional struggle for his sole dominance.

If the Soviet Union is to be preserved as the nucleus of peace, and the war peril facing all humanity thus exorcised, all friends of the Russian Revolution and of world peace must stand resolutely on the side of the Russian workers and peasants in order to assist them to defend the possibilities of democratic and Socialistic development of the Soviet Union against the nationalistic and Bonapartist policy of Stalin. The Moscow murders are perhaps one of the final warnings.—Yours, &c.,

Paris, August 23.

How the Workers Can Win in Spain

BY FELIX MORROW

1. CATALONIA SHOWS THE WAY

FEW REALIZE the significance of the successful campaign being fought by the Catalonian workers' militia on the Zaragoza-Huesca front. In the plans of the fascist generals Zaragoza, seat of the War College and one of the biggest army garrisons, was to have been for eastern Spain what Burgos has been in the west. But the rapidity with which the Catalonian proletariat crushed the Catalonian garrisons and marched westward into Aragon, defeated the fascist plans.

The Catalonian proletariat has been able to paralyze the reactionary forces in Aragon by rousing the peasantry as Madrid has been unable to. In every village the militia from Catalonia aids in setting up a village council (soviet) to which is turned over all the property belonging to big landowners and reactionaries. The village committee then organizes production on the new basis and creates a village militia to carry out socialization and fight reaction. Having thus transformed the world of the village, the Catalonian columns can go forward, secure in the knowledge that every village behind them is a fortress of the revolution!

This revolutionary method of conducting the civil war was made possible by the fact that the Catalonian proletariat was not handcuffed to the bourgeoisie through the People's Front. The organizations leading the vast majority of the workers and peasants of the four Catalan provinces—the Iberian Anarchist Federation (F.A.I.), the anarchist—led C.N.T. and the P.O.U.M. ("Workers Party")—were able, therefore, to prosecute the civil war through all-powerful organs controlled by the working-class organizations, and with a revolutionary social program which secures the maximum incentive from the masses.

It will be recalled that the Catalonian militia is directed by a Central Committee dominated by the anarcho-syndicalists and the P.O.U.M. This is now being supplemented by councils of delegates elected from the ranks which cover not only the militia but also link it with the soldiers and police who remained loyal. In Barcelona itself, there are joint committees of workers and police in every district, in addition to the special force created by the anarcho-syndicalists and the P.O.U.M. Thus all armed forces are actually independent of the bourgeois government.

Workers' Control in Catalonia

Direction of economic life is now in the hands of the workers themselves, through factory committees. There is also a "Council of Economy," with five members from the anarcho-syndicalists, one from the P.O.U.M., one from the U.G.T., and one from the Catalonian government. Its program, issued on August 19, includes col-

lectivization of landed estates to be run by landworkers' unions; collectivization of public utilities, transportation, big industry, and establishments abandoned by their owners; workers' control of banks until nationalized; workers' control of all enterprises continuing under private ownership; and a monopoly of foreign trade. To what extent the "Council of Economy," which is still linked by many threads to the existing regime, will become a brake or an aid to the workers, is not yet quite clear.

Catalonia's metal plants are transformed into munitions works, its auto factories are producing armored cars and airplanes. Latest dispatches show that Madrid depends greatly on Catalonia for all-important war supplies. A considerable part of the forces protecting the Madrid front were dispatched there by the Catalonian Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias.

The Catalonian government continues to exist, but does little more than pass decrees "approving" the steps taken by the proletariat. Madrid observes the formalities of conferring with this government, but transacts all its real business with the militia and factory committees. Since the government's attempt, at the end of July, to recoup its power by "broadening" its base with the entry of three Stalinists into the cabinet—a manouver which failed because the anarcho-syndicalists forced the Stalinists to resign—there have been no further attempts; for the proletariat is in no mood to be hoodwinked. Durrutti, C.N.T. chief, told the Federated Press correspondent, Pierre Van Paassen, that the proletariat was on guard against all attempts by the "loyal" bourgeoisie to seize control. Such little influence as the government still has, by virtue of its representation in the Council of Economy and the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias, will undoubtedly disappear as these organs, in accordance with P.O.U.M. proposals, are broadened into elective bodies of delegates from the militia and factories.

The revolutionary course of the Catalonian proletariat and its consequent successes in production and at the front constitute the most damning indictment of the Popular Front policy which is still being pursued in Madrid. Only on the road taken by the Catalonian proletariat can the Spanish masses defeat the counter-revolution!

2. THE POPULAR FRONT IN MADRID

The story on Spain in the "SOCIALIST CALL" of September 19, describing the socialization of production in Madrid, reflects credit on its author's correct desire for such a revolutionary program but is scarcely an accurate account of what has taken place in Madrid. The truth, unfortunately, is very different. The workers' committees in Madrid which at first took over the public utilities and big factories, were thereafter subordinated to the bureaucratic administration of the Giral-Azaña cabinet. This constriction is not bettered because the government now includes a socialist delegation. Until the workers are masters of the factories, those factories will not become fortresses of the revolution.

The government of Caballero is, like its predecessor, a Popular Front government. Undoubtedly the proletariat trusts Caballero infinitely more than it trusted his predecessor; and undoubtedly the premiership of Caballero, the "extreme" left wing of the Popular Front, is a distorted recognition that the masses will not fight for the maintenance of capitalism. But Caballero's former laurels cannot and will not be a substitute for the very concrete content of a program of revolutionary socialism.

Since he has assumed the premiership, Caballero has made no statement on program. Does his program for prosecution of the civil war differ from that of the preceding government? The majority in the cabinet—the right wing socialists, the Stalinists, and the five bourgeois ministers—have certainly not changed their program of limiting the struggle to a defense of bourgeois democracy. Caballero has apparently capitulated to this program.

"Only after victory shall we be allowed to defend the political and social problems of the various groups composing the Left Popular Front," says a government spokesman. "There is only one point in our program and that is to win vistory." (N. Y. Times, Sept. 20) In actual fact, however, the coalition government slogan, "Defend the Democratic Republic," **does** contain a social program; but it is the reformist program of defending the "kindest" political instrument of the bourgeois mode of production.

No civil war as profound as this has ever been won without advancing a revolutionary social program. The slogan of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" of 1793 meant, quite concretely, land to the peasants, freedom from serfdom, a new world of labor and enrichment, putting France into the hands of the revolutionary class. "Land, Bread and Freedom" in August and November 1917 successfully rallied the masses against Kornilov and Kerensky because it meant the transformation of Russia. The proletariat of Spain will raise equally revolutionary slogans, thereby arousing the great peasant masses, or it will not win the civil war.

The removal of the bourgeoisie from all strategic posts, or putting them under the control of supervising commissions of workers is an absolute necessity for successful struggle. The treachery of the republican bourgeoisie did not end in the first days, when the government concealed the scope of the uprising and refused to arm the workers. "The officers' corps is the guard of capital," as Trotsky has said. The crushing of this guard, the victory over the fascist forces, would make infinitely more likely the establishment of a workers' state. Therefore, the interests of the bourgeoisie are not served by such a victory: the true interests of Spanish capitalism lie in victory of the fascist generals or, what is the same thing, a compromise with them. Surrounded by armed workers, the republicans dare not openly go over to the enemy; but their policy, at the front, and in the rear, permits the counter-revolution success after success. This was the plain meaning of the change of government after the fall of Irun. But the change of government has still left the republicans in strategic posts in the cabinet, administration, general staff, factories, etc. etc.

The result of this false policy has been seen even in the period since Caballero became premier. The republican "defenders" of San Sebastian turned it over intact to the enemy, and have so planned the "defense" of Bilbao by the 40,00 militiamen in their control,—that most of the opposing army of General Mola has been sent to Madrid and Zaragoza! The ostensible justification of the Popular Front, that it secures the aid of the republican bourgeoisie, is utterly false; what it does is to enable the bourgeoisie to sabotage the struggle and prevent the proletariat from pursuing the necessary revolutionary methods.

Above all, it is intolerable that the workers shall do the drudgery and the dying, without a voice in the direction of the struggle. Caballero's announcement that the Cortes will convene again on October 1st takes no account of the fact that ages have gone by, measured politically, since the republican bourgeoisie was guaranteed a Cortes majority by the February pact of the Popular Front. The only authentic voice of the people today would be a National Congress of the elected delegates of the militia who are fighting, the workers who are producing and transporting, and the peasants who are providing the food. Only such a soviet, issuing from factory, militia and village committees, is competent to speak for Spain today.

3. STALINISM: THE NEW GUARD OF CAPITAL

Special consideration must be given to the role of the Stalinists who, having recruited most of their following under Popular Front slogans since February, have used them for the most shameless support of capitalism of which any proletarian party has ever been guilty.

The Stalinists even supported the Azaña-Giral governments' attempt o create a new army, apart from the militia, under direct government control. "Some comrades have wished to see in the creation of the new voluntary army something like a menace to the role of the militias," said the Stalinist MUNDO OBRERO of August 21. But no. "What is involved is to supplement and reinforce the militia to give it greater efficacy and speedily end the war."

CLARIDAD, left socialist organ, exposed this reactionary position. Having disposed of the excuses for the new army, CLARIDAD concluded:

"To think of another type of army to be substituted for those who are actually fighting and who in certain ways control their own revolutionary action, is to think in counter-revolutionary terms. That is what Lenin said **(State and Revolution):** 'Every revolution, after the destruction of the state apparatus shows us how the governing class tries to re-establish special bodies of armed men at "its" service, and how the oppressed class attempts to create a new organization of a type capable of serving not the exploiters but the exploited'." (CLARIDAD, Aug. 20).

Not those who usurp the prestige of the Russian revolution only to betray its principles in service to the bourgeoisie, not the Stalinists, but the vanguard of the left socialists teach the Spanish proletariat the Leninist conception of the class nature of the army!

After entering the cabinet, the Stalinists made clear their deadly opposition to a revolutionary program. "The slogan today is all power and authority to the People's Front Government" (DAILY WORKER, Sept. 11). That slogan means just what it says! Lenin's slogan "All power to the soviets" meant **no** power to the coalition government. The Stalinist slogan means no power to the embryo soviets, the factory, militia and village committees.

As Stalinism sacrificed the German revolution to the maintenance of the European **status quo,** so it is now seeking to sacrifice the Spanish revolution to the maintenance of the Franco-Soviet alliance. Stalinism will not raise the slogan of freedom from Morocco because that would embarass French colonial policy. Stalinism will not go over the People's Front to a revolutionary solution because that would bring the revolution immediately on the order of the day in France; and Stalinism prefers a strong bourgeois French ally to the possibility of a soviet France. The essence of Stalinist policy is: "Socialism in one country—and in no other country." The Stalinists have become open, shameless enemies of the proletarian revolution. Fortunately for the world proletariat, Stalinism in Spain does not command the forces it held in leash in Germany—and precisely because the lessons of Germany have entered the consciousness of the Spanish proletariat.

Catalonia is the beacon light for the Spanish proletariat. But it also points the lesson to workers everywhere: We cannot fight fascism if we let the bourgeoisie handcuff us to a bourgeois program. The French coalition government headed by Blum must play the same role that the Spanish Popular Front governments have played. So, too, the American coalition with the bourgeoisie, the Rooseveltian "American Labor Party." Only the struggle to win t he masses to a revolutionary Socialist party, for a revolutionary assault on capitalism, can save the proletariat.

From People's Front to French Front

BY MAURICE SPECTOR

THE EYES of the world are focussed on the civil war in Spain, but recent developments indicate that France too, is speeding towards a denouement no less fateful. A new strike wave of elemental force has registered the bankruptcy of the Matignon Agreements of last July. The Popular Front and the Blum government have entered the stage of crisis and inevitable collapse. Reaching fresh heights of nationalist frenzy, the Communist party proposes to transform the Popular Front into a "Front Francaise," a National Union of all classes.

That the Matignon settlements would settle nothing was evident to anyone with the slightest understanding of Marxism. The occupation of the factories, startling the collective party and trade union bureaucracies, was an unmistakable expression of a revolutionary situation, and a no less unmistakable, even if implied, demand for workers' control. Realizing that this potentially revolutionary movement threatened the reformist perspectives of the Popular Front, Blum, aided by Jouhaux and Thorez, hastily improvized the terms of the Matignon agreements as a means of effecting the evacuation of the factories. Even then hundreds of shop delegates vigorously protested the action of their communist representatives in the negotiations. But if the Stalinist leaders were able to stifle the strike movement of June, they are unable to prevent the resurgence of its causes. Strikes again follow in rapid succession, strikes for wage increases, strikes of solidarity, sit-in strikes. First the metal workers of Grenoble. then the lead miners of Savoy, the seamen of the Havre, the textile workers of Lille, the automobile workers of the Renault plant who sing the "Internationale" and hoist the red flag.

Nor could it be otherwise. The economic crisis that holds French capitalism in its deadly grip can neither be solved by patchwork reforms nor conjured away by exhuming the slogans of 1789. Only heroic measures which challenge the very foundations of capitalist society can solve this crisis. But the Popular Front is self-confessedly not the kind of government to take such measures. Finance Minister Auriol declares: "We are pursuing our common effort within the framework of the capitalist system . . . The Popular Front has never considered and so long as it exists as a government of liberty and democracy, it will never consider seizing property, sequestrating goods, overturning the social regime, or attacking liberty." Then what indeed, will the Blum government be pleased to consider? It will strive to operate as a glorified board of arbitration and conciliation between the forces of revolution and counter-revolution. But the fate of Kerensky in Russia, the tragic experiences of the German and Austrian proletariat, and the civil war in Spain all point the inescapable fact that nowhere and at no time has such a course for long been possible.

Reforms Ineffective

Floundering around to placate both capital and labor, the government only succeeds in augmenting chaos. Even the social reforms that Blum enacts cannot be realized in the framework of present-day French capitalism

without sharpening the crisis. The wage increases of July have been more than cancelled by the rise in the cost of living. Wholesale prices have increased 7 per cent and retail prices 3½ per cent. The manufacturers claim that labor costs have increased from 8 to 22 per cent. The small capitalist who voted for the People's Front complains that he cannot compete with the Trusts. The peasant owner fears that the crisis of the franc will be solved at his expense by means of inflation. The budgetary deficit for 1936 amounts to 23 billion francs. There is an increasingly adverse trade balance.

As a result, the masses are again on the march. Once more the workers are occupying the factories, a revolutionary phenomenon that strikes at the heart of capitalist law and order. How does the Blum government react? In his recent speech Daladier said the following:

"We will not permit excesses caused by men who follow not the wise counsels of labor leaders but agents provocateurs . . . . it is therefore necessary to put an end to these endlessly renewed occupational conflicts which would end by disorganizing production and trade and also by gravely compromising national defense." This matter of "national defense" was particularly calculated to reach the Communist party, which is prepared to sacrifice every class interest of the proletariat to the exigencies of the Franco-Soviet Pact. The Minister of the Interior, Salengro, knew this, when turning to Duclos, communist Vice-President of the Chamber, he demanded, "Yes or no! If I am obliged to use public force to compel the evacuation of the factories, will you support me?" To which the Stalinist Duclos humbly responded with "Yes."

Stalinists Draw "Lesson" from Spain

It is the characteristic dream of every social-reformist coalition government that when it takes the reins of office, the class struggle will oblingingly suspend itself. Unfortunately for the Popular Front, no period of history was ever in more bitter conflict with the routine of constitutionalism. While the Stalinists were still pointing to the Popular Front majority in Spain as the means of peacefully liquidating Fascism, Franco was preparing the Fascist coup d'etat that brought the armies of bloody counter-revolution to the very gates of Madrid. The subordination of the program of social revolution to the interests of the bourgeois democracy has decidedly failed to stop Fascism or prevent civil war. It has perhaps mortally jeopardized the Spanish revolution. But that is not the lesson the French Stalinists draw from the Spanish events. Speaking to a mass meeting at the Renault plant, Maurice Thorez, leader of the CP declares: "We refuse, especially in the light of the horror of the Spanish events, to accept the perspective of two camps irreconcilably ranged against each other and leading to a civil war which for our country would be more fatal than for Spain, if only because of the threat of Hitler." (l'HUMANITE, Sept. 4).

The logic of the Franco-Soviet military pact and of its prime sponsors, the Soviet bureaucracy, unfolds remorselessly. The Popular Front has not proved an effective enough means to curb the class struggle in the interests of national unity. The French proletariat must be delivered over yet more firmly to the orders of the General Staff. It is no accident that at the very time that Stalin was ordering the execution of survivors of the Bolshevik Old Guard, and monstrously framing of a connection between Trotsky and the Gestapo, Stalin's agency in France was promoting the idea of a new alignment, the "French Front." Every fresh Stalinist betrayal of the principles of Bolshevism has been accompanied by a like attack on the Leninist revolutionaries, in order to create a diversion and to strangle all criticism.

"National Union" Slogan of C.P.

What is to be the program of the C.P's projected National Front? The answer is suggested by Jaques Duclos in l'HUMANITE. "What," he writes, "are the problems which demand the attention of all Frenchmen anxious for the future of our country, if it is not the maintenance of order, defense of the national economy, and national security." The language is bitterly familiar. It was the language of Ebert, Scheidemann and Noske, executioners of the German revolution. It does not vary greatly from the language of Hitler or Mussolini. The "maintenance of order" means the Stalinist sabotage of the class struggle, keeping the workers fettered to the wage system for fear of disturbing "national unity." "One must understand how to end strikes" said Thorez in July. Certainly the workers' occupation of the factories or any attempt at workers' control does not conduce to the "maintenance of order" under capitalism, and Duclos has reference to no other social order. What "national security" means is equally clear from Thorez' article in the same organ: "Peace must be defended at all costs. We must welcome the collaboration of all who are in favor of peace. We must come to an understanding with Poland despite the fact that its constitution is not truly democratic, with Italy despite Mussolini and even with Hitler's Germany . . . " It is well known that last summer for the first time in its history, the parliamentary representation of the French Communist party merely abstained on the vote for military credits whereas in the past it always opposed them. But now Duclos is actually urging the Army Committee of the Chamber to convene more quickly in order to take measures in reply to Hitler's introduction of the three-year term. "The fascist officers sow division in the army. However they are your superiors. You must obey them. Be disciplined even under their orders," so advises LE CONSCRIT, (Aug. 29) Stalinist organ, the young conscripts who might otherwise be anti-militarist.

Socialists Reject French Front

The project of the Front Francaise has been received with mixed feelings by the Radical and rejected by the Socialist party (SFIO). It is an embarassing turn of events for the Radicals. They used to be in a real National Front in former days, and broke with their nationalist allies. Now they are invited to join this neo-nationalist creature. The Socialists used to be in a Left Bloc (or Cartel) and broke with it under the pressure of the crisis and radicalization of the masses. Now they are invited not merely to rejoin the Left Cartel (they did that in the form of the Popular Front under the pressure of the Stalinists) but to become part of a National Front, which is to include even the most reactionary and imperialist section of the big bourgeosie, the Clericals, and the Fascist Croix de Feu, if it is willing. The POPULAIRE of September 4 reports that at its recent session the Executive Committee of the Socialist party turned thumbs down on the communists' project on the ground that it was nothing but an attempt to resurrect the National Union.

The action of the Socialists has been received with rage by the Stalinists, even though they dissemble it. The rift in the Popular Front must lead to a complete cleavage. The ultra-nationalist Communist party, motivated principally by the needs of Stalin's foreign policy, is not satisfied with the semi-pacifism of its socialist allies. Meanwhile in the Socialist party voices are raised in favor of a return to a united front (of working class parties and organizations) which would resume the struggle for political power. As they meet with opposition to their nationalist plans, the Stalinists will attack the Socialists with the same fury that PRAVDA attacked

Bauer and other leaders of the Second International, for failing to endorse the frame-up of the Moscow trials. Fantastically enough PRAVDA interprets the intervention of the leaders of the Second International as an attempt "to sabotage the united front of the working class in order to create a united front with the bourgeoisie." Shameless is perhaps a better description of PRAVDA than fantastic.

United Front Versus Popular Front

The course of the French C.P. has not escaped challenge from its own ranks, as the expulsion of Andrè Ferrat from the Central Committee proves. Ferrat has come to a realization that the CP has abandoned the position of the class truggle in favor of class collaboration. But his conclusions with regard to the Popular Front show a lack of realization of its real significance. Ferrat said he was not hostile to the Popular Front but only to those of its tactics which spelled the "sacred union." He is for the Popular Front of the June strike wave and the alliance of the workers and lower middle classes. But what he fails to see is that the June strikes (like the present strikes) are in irreconcilable contradiction with the aims and conditions of the Popular Front. There is no other Popular Front than this coalition on the basis of the capitalist system and bourgeois democracy. The Popular Front is not the United Front. The latter is the joint action for concrete class objectives in the struggle of working class parties and organizations. We oppose the Popular Front because we are for the United Front of the working class against the capitalist class. There can be no other means of organizing the struggle against either Fascism or war, than in the struggle against the capitalist state.

The Popular Front has failed to effect the "reconciliation of all Frenchmen" or bring a "strong, free and happy France." It has not stopped Fascism in Spain and is not stopping Fascism in France. On the contrary, the French bourgeoisie is taking advantage of the helplessness of the Blum government to regain the initiative. They bent before the storm in June, but only because they knew their Popular Front government. The bourgeois leaders knew they had nothing to lose. If the Blum Government acted like every conventional bourgeois ministry, it was immaterial whether Blum was Prime Minister or Daladier or Herriot. They knew that the decisive role in the government would be played by the Radicals, Daladier and the others. Should the Blum government be unable to curb the restive proletariat, a state of disorder would follow ("anarchy"), the state that preceded the advent of Mussolini in Italy, seizure of factories. They would then urge Fascism as the salvation of the country from disorder and production from "anarchy." Besides Fascism still lacks a wide enough mass basis. La Rocque has not quite satisfied the requirements of a supple Fascist demagogue. A candidate for this role has come forward in the person of Jacques Doriot, former Stalinist leader.

A Possible Savior

Doriot preaches the national revolution, against social conservatism and alien interference. He declares that he is prepared to use all means, even parliamentary, to gain power. Here is a demagogue with a communist past and some roots in the masses, who has already taken away thousands of aristocratic La Rocquè's following, and whose party, the French Popular party, with its organ "EMANCIPATION NATIONALE," has already received the widest publicity in the country. Not the least significant feature of Doriot's propaganda is based on what he well knows of the nationalist degeneration of the Stalinist bureaucracy both in Moscow and in Paris. He too is confidently counting on the inevitable failure of the Blum government to cope with the fundamental problems of the crisis. And no less astutely is he taking advantage of the social-patriotic agitation of the CP, to accuse it of attempting to drive France into a war with Hitler in the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

No, the Front Populaire has not stopped Fascism. It has only retarded the working class. It has fed them with parliamentary illusions. It has brought no alleviation in the economic situation. It has not armed the French working class against such an eventuality as the Spanish events. But if the Popular Front in France can not fight Fascism, neither can the Popular Front prevent the working class, as the crisis gets more acute, from resorting to revolutionary action. Whether or not the French proletariat will defeat Fascism and triumph over the capitalist state, depends on the degree to which the French proletariat emancipates itself from the illusions of the Popular Front, and in its elemental surging mass action, crystallizes a revolutionary party, a party of Marx and Lenin.

CABALLERO AT THE HELM

BY BEN HERMAN

NEWS dispatches agree that two powers exist in "Republican" Spain today. One is that of the armed workers and peasants, organized into Workers' Committees. This is the **real** power in Spain. The other is that of the "regular" government—a mere shadow, impotent, even discredited. One need only read some of the dispatches:

> **"The Red Militia.... hold the fate of Spain in their hands. In Madrid they largely outnumber the police force." (N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 5, 1936).**
>
> **"The Spanish cabinet normally has restricted jurisdiction over Madrid and a few large towns. It is well aware that its police administration now is largely an illusion." (N.Y. TIMES, Aug. 25, 1936).**
>
> **"....it (the government of Catalonia) moves under the shadow of proletarian organizations that regard it somewhat disdaintfully as a rubber stamp for the approval of decisions, demands and fait accomplis." (N. Y. TIMES, Aug. 11, 1936).**
>
> **"Virtual control of Barcelona is in the hands of Anti-Fascist militiamen headed by a military committee, including delegates from the proletarian parties. They are acting in conjunction with the Catalan government. The public utilities are operated by workers' committees.... The railways are in control of committees of workers who seized the station here and elsewhere in Catalonia." (N.Y. TIMES, July 28, 1936).**

Power lies with the workers. But this is not the first time that it has occurred. This is not the first Caballero to become premier. In post-war revolutionary Austria and Germany the real power was in the hands of the workers' organizations. In each case the bourgeoisie sought out some "leftist" who would persuade the masses to relinquish their arms and restore power to the bourgeoisie. Only in Russia where the revolutionary Socialists (Bolsheviks) wrested the masses away from the influence of the Russian Caballeros did the proletariat use its power to crush the bourgeoisie and establish a workers' state. Fascist dictatorships in Austria and Germany. Proletarian dictatorship in Russia. These are the living monuments to the correctness of the Bolshevik principles.

Workers Have Power in Spite of Parties

If the workers have power in Spain we cannot possibly blame the Socialist and Communist parties. Quite the contrary. Their tactics have hindered this development. In the last election to the Cortes they joined with the bourgeois democrats **around a common bourgeois democratic program and a common slate of candidates.** This slate gave a position of importance to the Republicans far out of proportion to their real strength. In the 1933 elections the Left Republicans gained seven seats; in 1936 the S.P. and C.P. allowed them to gain 81 seats. After the electoral victory of February when thousands of workers were, through their own initiative, "illegally" destroying reactionary arsenals and liberating proletarian prisoners, the Executive Committee of the S.P. could say only this: " . . . be prudent and refrain from all hasty and unlawful acts before the legal power to right all wrongs is put into our hands." (N.Y. TIMES Feb. 18, 1936).

For fully six months the S.P. and C.P. supported one or another bourgeois government. These governments of course maintained the army apparatus which today is fighting against the workers. They used police force to expel peasants from the land; they declared strikes illegal in certain regions and shut down workers' headquarters; they allowed reactionary judges who refused to convict fascists to remain in office.

Azaña, the bourgeois president of Spain, was elected by socialist and communist votes. And this in spite of the fact that there was no opposition candidate! The reactionaries had abstained.

These policies could act only to undermine the class independence of the proletariat and bolster the prestige of the anti-labor bourgeois politicians.

Bourgeois State Impotent

But today, in spite of the aid administered to the bourgeois parties by the C.P. and S.P., the state apparatus remains impotent. In the heat of battle the Workers' Committees have been forged. **They** occupy the position of greatest authority in the eyes of the masses. **They** hold armed power. **They** direct the fight. Why is this so? The iron logic of events has demonstrated that the bourgeois state apparatus is incapable of serving the needs of the masses in their struggle. The bourgeois politicians have been exposed as incapable of carrying on a real fight against the fascists. There is only one organ which can and is mobilizing the widest masses for this struggle, the Workers' Committees.

Quite naturally the bourgeoisie tries to restore the shattered state machinery. Since its military force is inadequate for the purpose, it resorts to the expedient of a "socialist" government, to win the confidence of the masses. Premier Giral resigns "in favor of a regime which should have the maximum weight with the working classes throughout Spain." Thus is born the Caballero government whose function it is to restore the shattered prestige of the state machinery, to remove the initiative and influence of the Workers' Committees, to restore power to the bourgeoisie.

The Caballero government proceeds at full speed to fulfill its obligations to the bourgeoisie. According to the N.Y. TIMES of Sept. 13, 1936 . . . "the government announced tonight that the Cortes would be reconvened October 1, 'to legislate a fresh code of laws to give the Spanish workers a new place in the sun'."

But why do the workers need the Cortes to legislate for them? Have they not already accomplished in fact what the Cortes will give them on paper? The first Cortes declared that "Spain is a democratic republic of the workers of all classes." Has this pious statement meant anything? Where has the Cortes been up till now? It is the Workers' Committees that have organized the resistance to the fascists. They do not need the legal stamp of the Cortes.

Says the N.Y. TIMES: "Well informed sources believe this decision was based on a desire to legalize as soon as possible measures adopted arbitrarily during the revolt."

The Catalonian workers take over the running of the factories. Days later the President of Catalonia forms a council and "requests" the workers to administer industry. The workers of Spain, "arbitrarily" enact measures for the benefit of the masses. Caballero, weeks later, is to call the Cortes to enact these same measures "legally." Is not the connection apparent?

Caballero Gives Strength to Bourgeoisie

All this has one and only one meaning. Caballero and his government wish to wrest the initiative away from the Workers' Committees. Caballero considers the Cortes **the** legal body in Spain, **the** body which should have prime influence, **the** body without whose approval all acts are **illegal.**

This is further substantiated by the statement of Caballero's Cabinet upon assuming office: (N.Y. TIMES Sept. 6, 1936). "The new government considers itself directly representative of all the political forces fighting on the various fronts for the preservation of the democratic republic . . . . "

But . . . . "the political forces fighting on the various fronts" are already represented, are already united in the Workers' Committees. The bourgeois state machinery is a shadow; it has organized no fight. Why bolster it up? Of course some of the political forces standing for the "democratic republic"—namely the bourgeois parties—have hardly any representatives at all on the Workers' Committees. But that is because there is nothing to represent. The Workers' Committees represent the masses, they "represent" struggle. The bourgeois parties are made for the field of parliamentary picnics not for the field of struggle.

And does this government really represent all the forces fighting against the fascists? The anarchists who have decisive influence over large sections of the masses are not at all represented. The anarchists—in spite of their anti-political protestations—are represented in the Workers' Committees. And this, in spite of the fact that these committees are political instruments of the working class. This need not surprise us. The Workers' Committees are the most authoritative organs of the proletariat. No party with mass support can remain opposed to them without losing its following. The logic of events, the necessity for an organ of struggle forces all working class parties to join in the Workers' Committees, including the Anarchists.

Workers Subordinated to Bourgeois Republic

The government continues: "The new government program is based entirely on a firm intention to hasten a triumph over the rebellion by coordinating the strength of the people in united action. **All other political interests must be subordinated until the insurrection has been put down."** (our emphasis)

As far as unifying the fight is concerned, this government will do exactly the opposite. It will tend especially to split the anarchist workers away from the Socialist and Communist government parties.

But the government wants "all other political interests subordinated" to its program. It is precisely here that the anti-revolutionary essence of the Caballero policy shines through. It cannot be denied that the main task of the workers today is to defeat the fascists. But who is to carry on this fight? Who can carry on this fight? Which is to dominate—the Workers' Committees or the bourgeois state machinery?

The entire situation of dual power shouts out this question. Which power is to be supreme? Which power is to be subordinated? Caballero's answer is ready—the Workers' Committees must be subordinated to the bourgeois government apparatus.

Caballero stands with the bourgeoisie against proletarian power.

Secession in Pennsylvania and Connecticut ✤ *An Editorial*

AT THE Cleveland Convention, the Militant majority, having settled accounts, after its own fashion with the New York Old Guard, called a halt in mid-stream. In a vain and desperate attempt to check the power of the prevailing political winds and currents, it tossed over the sails and rudder of political principle. With such a trimming of the party ship, it proceeded to—"maneuver." A reformist election platform, concession and compromise on organization policy, watering down of the trade union resolution, shelving of the united front resolution, places on the N.E.C., all of these and more were undertaken. For what purpose? To consummate a deal with Hoopes and Hoan and McLevy. But this deal, alas, from the first was not worth the paper and the words that sealed it. It was like a contract to deliver the moon, contradicting the laws of politics no less than the latter would contradict the law of gravitation.

In its analysis of the Convention, the APPEAL stated that the price of this deal—sacrifice of principle and disorientation of the membership—was too high, too high indeed to pay for any maneuver. Now, four months after, we have a more ample test from experience to apply to the bargain, to determine what was received for value given. And the test shows us a net gain of—zero; and after loss added to the original purchase price. In rapid succession (leaving out of account the accepted Old Guard cohorts in Maryland, Rhode Island, etc.) the Jewish Federation, the Finnish Federation, the majority in Pennsylvania and Connecticut have pulled stakes and departed. Yes: Pennsylvania with its two N.E.C. members, elected at Cleveland, and Connecticut with its doughty, finger-shaking Jasper McLevy. Departed, and left no addresses. Forced the departure deliberately: in Pennsylvania and Connecticut carrying it through openly by amending the respective State Party Constitutions to strike out the clause providing for affiliation with the Socialist Party of the U. S.

Militant and Right Wing Attitude Contrasted

The record, on both sides, of every secessionist move is virtually identical: a bold, aggressive fight by the right; an ambiguous policy of conciliation, pleading and compromise on the part of the Militant leaders. The Jewish Federation, after openly and brazenly flouting the party in every available manner, and sending accredited delegates to the Convention of the Social-Democratic Federation, was begged by the July meeting of the N.E.C. to remain loyal, and given another month to apologize. Mayor Stump of Reading opened the Pennsylvania Convention with a smashing attack on the party; the Militants replied by squabbling for hours over the seating of delegates, and climaxed their efforts by sending Dr. Jesse Holmes to the platform to plead for peace, apologize for "left wingers," and call for true idealism and brotherhood. In Connecticut McLevy, before opening up, was obliging enough to permit the Militant delegates to vote unanimously for his entire slate of candidates and his State election platform. His motion for disaffiliation struck like a bombshell after such whole-hearted "maneuvering"; but Devere Allen's pleas for harmony, peace and fair play, like the New Milford delegate's plagues on both the houses, fell on deaf ears in the camp of the Sales-Tax Mayor.

Why these ungrateful rebuffs from the right wingers? these rejections and blunt refusals and final divisions? Is it because these are "disloyal men," corrupt fakers, of ill will and evil intention? Not at all. It is because these men—the leaders of the Jewish and Finnish Federations, the municipal socialists of Reading and Bridgeport—do not differ an iota in fundamental political principle from the New York Old Guard, from Waldman and Oneal. The municipal socialists are perhaps more "practical" politicians, somewhat more active and less given to "theory"; but basically they are the same: conservative reformists. And, as the laws of politics teach us, those who hold the same political **principles** end up, sooner or later, in the same political **organization.** The identity of principle forces the organizational fusion. The incidental and temporary causes which kept Pennsylvania and Connecticut (as well as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Washington....) from breaking away at Cleveland could not operate for long. The water and the oil refused to become a stable compound. And therefore the splits. In the same light we can predict with fair assurance that others who differ in no important political particular from the already departed, but who are restrained now by local political exigencies, will not be long in following. For in what, except in accent and stature, do they differ from Hoopes or McLevy?

The tactic of conciliation and compromise has netted, then, exactly nothing. No single segment has been "saved" for the party; no right wing group has been wheedled into abandoning the direction dictated by its political nature. Indeed, it is worse than nothing. For the policy of conciliation and compromise has enabled the right wing leaders to depart with their following intact, with their forces in good order and their morale high. They have retired from the field as victors not as defeated. And, conversely, the loyal party membership has not had the opportunity to learn from the secessions, to discover more clearly their political meaning, to understand the issues involved in them.

Necessity of an Offensive Against Right Wing

A sharp, clear political **offensive** against the right wing reformist leaders, on the contrary, would have disorganized the enemy, would have thrown them into confusion, would have forced them into retreat; and, furthermore, would have won over large sections of their following, who remained with their old leaders only because the significance of the fight had never been made clear to them. Most important of all, a clear political offensive would have educated, armed and strengthened the loyal party members, would have prepared them for the tasks that lie ahead. What a magnificent opportunity, for example, the Connecteut Convention would have been for a pitiless exposure of reformist municipal socialism at its worst—exemplified in the flesh by the petty office-seeker McLevy, with his open-shop industrialist friends, his support of the Sales Tax, his reactionary educational policy, his fake "good government" slogans—and a stirring contrast with it of the ideas and principles of revolutionary Marxism. But instead: unanimous **support** of McLevy's candidates and platform. To compromise with a hardened reformist leader is always a double loss: **he** is lost to begin with, and you lose others in the failure to conduct a correct fight against him.

No tears need be shed that Hoopes and Stump and

McLevy have left the party, nor that others will probably follow. We may and should regret that the party has been weakened in a way that was unnecessary by their leaving. But regret is less important than the firm resolution to learn from experience—if not from the experience of others (which is often the best and cheapest method) then at any rate from our own. The party must decide its course. More and more clearly we can realize: the party must become in word and act the party of revolutionary Marxism in this country. There is, whether we like it or not, no other path. There is simply no room in the United States for two parties of parliamentary reformism—and that road is now monopolized by the Social-Democratic Federation. Until the Socialist party decides clearly its path—the revolutionary path—and acts accordingly, it courts the danger of losing, to the parliamentary reformists on the one side, to the Stalinists on the other. But once that decision is made, and once actions flow properly from it, the road is clear and the future mighty with promise.

Should Socialists Work for a Labor Party?

NOTE: Comrade Tyler's article on behalf of the idea that Socialists must help build a Labor party, published in the August issue of the APPEAL, brought four replies. We published Comrade Burnham's answer in the last issue. Since all of the articles submitted contained many arguments which are similar we have deemed it advisable to print excerpts of two of the articles in this issue and of the other two in the next issues. We hope that those who favor Comrade Tyler's viewpoint will submit their contributions to the discussion.

John Stirling is the pseudonym of a comrade who has been active in the party for quite a few years. He was a delegate to the Cleveland Convention.

FROM JOHN STIRLING:

THOSE party members who conceive it to be the duty of the Socialist party to create a Labor party are unanimous in regarding it (they have their own definite antecedent for it) as a step toward the conquest of power, and, in particular, as **the** next step. This Labor party we are to work within, as a federated member. It is the Eagle Brand milk that will wean the workers from the dugs of the capitalist parties to the strong diet of the revolutionary struggle. We are to **build** it, even though we disagree with its formulation of principles, we are to lavish our precious efforts on its objectives and are to steer it away from the pitfalls of the People's Front. We can't build our own party just now—except in a purely organizational way; the only alternatives are to build the Labor party or to sit idly by and watch history make our decisions for us. So Gus Tyler. I suspect that the alternative is not an alternative at all, that the former course is the contemporary version of the latter, but let us assume that they are alternatives. Are they then exhaustive of the possibilities? Some of us think they are not.

* * * *

The Labor Party, says Tyler, is "the expression of trade union consciousness when it has reached the political level." He should have said **an** expression. Since the fate of the working class depends on **just how** that consciousness is developed, Tyler's loose expression is indicative of a fundamentally false approach. Is the Labor Party an expression of political consciousness that we want to encourage or not? This is the nub of the whole question, and we must stop awhile at this point and not simply rehearse a syllogism to the effect that unionism expresses itself in the Labor Party, we are for unionism, therefore we are for the Labor Party.

* * * *

We all believe in fostering independent political action on the part of the trade unions. Comrade Gross on behalf of the Labor resolution at Cleveland, reiterated the sentiments of all of us, in holding this to be a separate question from that of the Labor party.

This is admittedly advocacy of a working-class party; it does not involve support of, but rather opposition to, a labor party, handed down from above. It means first and foremost uncompromising opposition to our leading Labor party, Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt. At present, the purposes of Lewis and Hillman are served by swinging labor behind Roosevelt; in 1940 or 1944 (if we carry on our agitational work in the unions as we should), they, or their successors, will try more extreme measures. If, in view of the rising tide of revolt among the rank-and-file, an endorsement of a Republican or Democrat is impossible, an unmasked Labor party will come on the field, with hand-picked candidates, to keep the workers from supporting the Socialist party. Already, in many localities, labor parties are being formed by trade union bureaucrats in an attempt to forestall any determined swing to the left. Trade union leaders are not slow in learning the possibilities of a Labor party as a means of holding onto power for a while longer; in this respect it is ominous that the same John L. Lewis who leads an emancipatory movement, the C.I.O., holds a halter behind his back, Labor's Non-Partisan League for Roosevelt, with which to head the young colt into safe pastures.

* * * *

Tyler is utterly wrong when he says that the Labor party "bears the same relationship to the revolutionary party on the electoral field as do the trade unions on the industrial field." The electoral field, for Socialists, has but one use, to serve as a recurrent forum in which the socialist analysis of capitalism, of recent events, of trends, and the inseparable question of the seizure of power by the working class can be driven home to large sections of the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. The Labor party, like the other capitalist parties, like also the Communist party of the present has but one use, to befog the issues in a thick smoke of misleading programs, false hopes and deceptive personalities. The Labor party is one more refinement in capitalist electioneering, with which we should have nothing to do ourselves, and which we should expose to the workers.

* * * *

How then are we to put up with the Labor party? Are we to gnash our teeth in outer darkness, while expert architects of labor parties, say the Stalinists, travel the high road of revolutionary success? No, we spend no time wailing over lost opportunities, but we do not confound the tombstones of past failures with the signposts of new opportunities. Granted, that my union has not only gone on record favoring a Labor party, but, over my opposition, is involved in the construction of one. In view of the fact that I and my fellow Socialists have forewarned the brothers, there can be no misunderstanding if we work, loyally abiding by the rule of the

majority, for the Labor party's candidates, at the same time criticizing its program. We are in the unions, after all—if we aren't, the entire question of socialism is but of academic interest—and no power on earth can keep us out of the Labor party, the inadequacies of which we constantly expose. Psychologically, we may be suspect in many quarters—what revolutionary can afford the luxury of pleasing everybody, or can even escape the distrust of many who will later be loyal comrades?

If our position has been made clear in advance, how obviously loyal we have been to the trade union struggle in giving critical support to its abortively formulated objectives! Then, when the time of awakening comes, we will deserve and will get the only confidence worth anything—trust in our revolutionary integrity. Coincident with the work of Socialists, or Socialist Leagues, in the trade unions, indeed the presupposition of it, the party, whether as federated member of the Labor party or not, but presumably not, both carries to the masses the agitation for conquest of power by the proletariat, and tells them, for the present, to vote for the Labor party's candidates. Only if the party's revolutionary stand is clear, only if the program of the Labor party is mercilessly criticised, can our stand in support of its candidates be unequivocally and uncompromisingly made. The trade union bureaucrats running for office will be infuriated, but they can no more avoid our support than could Hoan the (more enthusiastic) support of the Communists in the Milwaukee elections.

Trotsky has reminded us that the famous slogan of Danton, **De l'audace, toujours de l'audace, et encore de l'audace** must be the motto of a revolutionary party. The second commandment is like unto the first, and it reads, **De la vèritè, toujours de la vèritè, et encore de la vèritè,** which is to say: the truth, at all times the truth, and yet again the truth.

R. L. BURKE SAYS:

THE BELIEF in the inevitability of a national Farmer-Labor Party is sometimes based on nothing more than the vulgar interpretation of history by the method of uncritical analogy. In other countries, notably in Great Britain, the Labor Party has represented a stage in the separation of the working class from the capitalist political parties and the movement toward independent class action. Ergo, the same process must be repeated in the United States where the bulk of the workers are still attached to the two old political parties. This method of political analysis ignores the vast changes in the character of capitalism since the formation of the British Labor Party and similar parties. Rising capitalism was the classic period of reformism. In the period of declining capitalism, the decaying capitalism of today, reformism is domed to futility. Moreover, the workers are not foredoomed to go through this stage, but under the impact of rapidly changing events can move directly into the revolutionary stage. A number of factors indicate an acceleration of the class struggle in the United States: the split in the A. F. of L., the organization drive of the CIO, the reflection of events in Spain and France, the possibility of war and of a new economic crisis, to mention only a few. On the other hand, the factors which appear to point to the development of a Labor party may very well prove to be temporary and partial. Aside from the frenzied incantations of the Communists, there is the existence of a number of state farmer-labor parties, the attempt to form local or state labor parties, and the passing of resolutions by various trade union organizations. None of these are new phenomena; the rapid growth of a revolutionary movement would soon sweep them all into the dustbin of history. The powerful bloc of unions joined in Labor's Non-Partisan League has indeed promised a "new political alignment" in 1940. But tied to Roosevelt's kite as it is, it too will be swept aside as a result of the inevitable disillusionment of the workers with Roosevelt.

The future of reformism, of a Labor party, is by no means a matter of inexorable historical development. The economic crisis of capitalism disturbs the political equilibrium which prevails in "normal" times and produces new political alignments. But this process is not a mechanical one; it takes on the most diverse rhythms and the most variegated forms. The role of the vanguard party is of decisive importance in canalizing the awakening consciousness of the working class into revolutionary paths.

A mass Labor party is by no means inevitable. But even if it is, that is no indication that Socialists must take the leadership in building such a party. The failure to do so will not be detrimental to the future of the Socialist Party; in fact, it will be quite the contrary. The sole perspective for the Socialist Party, in case a Labor party is formed, need not be that of working within such a party. There are numerous variant tactics; but if necessary, Socialists can and will find a way to work in the reformist party.

Two Testing Grounds: Wisconsin and Minnesota

It is precisely at this point that the experiences of Wisconsin and Minnesota afford such rich and instructive contrasts. To be sure, it would take a long stretch of the imagination to call the Wisconsin Socialist party a revolutionary party. Its socialism is of the predominantly municipal socialist variety, reformist in character. Naturally it is for socialism, but much in the same way as devout believers are for heaven. In this respect it differs little from other reformist parties, such as the Minnesota Farmer-Labor Party which believes that "natural resources and monopolized industries essential to our national life and well being must **ultimately** be collectively and democratically controlled and operated. . . . " (Emphasis not in original). Like the latter, its methods and program do not extend beyond what is possible within the framework of the existing order. It thus fails to organize its followers and to educate its supporters to the necessity of overthrowing capitalism. It fosters the fatal illusion that the capitalist state can be used to secure an amelioration in the condition of the exploited. It is thus in essence reformist. Its task in joining the Farmer-Labor Progressive Federation was not that of reconciling a revolutionary party with a reformist party, but that of combining its own special brand of reformism with that of a newer brand.

The Farmer-Labor and Progressive Federation, was formed in the latter part of 1935 by the coming together of nine economic and political groups: the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor, the Railroad Brotherhoods, Farmer's Equity Union, Wisconsin Co-operative Milk Pool, Wisconsin Farm Holiday Association, Wisconsin Worker's Alliance, Socialist Party, Progressive Party and the Farmer-Labor Progressive League. The State Federation of Labor for 15 years had passed resolutions favoring independent political action. In addition, as stated in the Declaration of Principles, adopted at Milwaukee, Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1935, the Federation was an outgrowth of the discontent of the workers and farmers with the reactionary actions of the 1935 state legislature. The Federation thus represented the development of an additional mass of workers to the position of working-class reformism, a position which the Wisconsin party had long held. Under the circumstances there could be no valid reasons why the S.P. should stay out of the Federa-

tion. It is true than only with some difficulty did it manage to get inserted into the declaration of principles a condemnation of the present system and a declaration that "this farmer-labor federation proposes to change the present economic system based primarily on production for profit to an economic system based primarily on production for use." This statement of intentions is left suspended in mid-air. Nowhere is there any statement of how such a system can be attained. For the most party the platform is a collection of contradictory immediate demands. It fosters every reformist illusion. Practically everything is to be attained through legislation. The 1935 platform includes a section on "War." The latter is to be prevented by government manufacture and sale of munitions and armaments "so that none may profit from human slaughter," by a referendum to determine if the people want war, and by "life imprisonment for bankers and newspaper owners connected with foreign governments financially or otherwise who use their businesses to advocate our entrance into any foreign conflict," etc.!

Inevitably, in such a party, the center of gravity must prove to be the conservative and even reactionary forces. This was abundantly illustrated at the June 1936 convention of the Federation at Oshkosh, Wisconsin. The convention met in order to endorse candidates and draw up an election program. On the insistence of Governor LaFollette and his progressive followers, the "production for use" plank was clarified, i.e., omitted from the platform. Then the Governor refused to join the Federation or abide by its discipline. The constitution required that only members be endorsed. Obligingly, the convention omitted to endorse any candidate leaving the field open to LaFollette. Of course all these incidents are of minor significance as compared with the character of the party. Moreover, the Socialist party does not play a progressive role within the federation because it is not itself revolutionary. And if it were, it probably could not stay in the Federation very long. As it is, the Socialist Party has for the most part given up independent activity on a state-wide basis.

Attitude of Minnesota S. P. to F. L. P.

The Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota has had a much longer existence, almost a decade and a half, than the Wisconsin Federation. Both the Communist and Socialist parties took an active part in the formation and building of the Farmer-Labor party. Moreover, they sincerely believed in it as a necessary and progressive step. Yet, here too, conservatism proved to be the center of gravity. The Communists and Socialists soon lost their freedom of agitation within the Farmer-Labor Party. The Socialist party, particularly, thereafter became a mere shell of an organization. It considered its function as that of educating the members of the Farmer-Labor party for socialism. This was mere self-deception. The Socialist party as such carried little weight in the Farmer-Labor party. It supported the party uncritically. Occasionally it made sporadic attempts to assert its independence by running one or more candidates.

But now there is a new and different Socialist party in Minnesota. At its last State convention it adopted tactics and a platform which show its revolutionary character. The platform aptly characterizes the role of the Farmer-Labor party. "The Farmer-Labor party of Minnesota, though based on workers' and farmers' organizations is not, however, the expression of workers and farmers independent political action. Controlled by small bankers, contractors, drug store proprietors, lawyers and political office seekers, the Farmer-Labor party dickers with the old capitalist parties, and in the present election is supporting the candidate of the Democratic Party, Roosevelt . . . . . The bulk of its activities result in the preservation of the profit system; that is the protection of the interests of the employers as a class . . . . . the Farmer Labor party can give no significant reforms to the masses." The platform points out that although "the Minnesota Farmer-Labor party biannually adopts a radical program for the 'cooperative commonwealth'," it "in practice has not and cannot give any security to the workers and farmers of Minnesota. Even its program of reforms, which in themselves cannot solve the needs of the producers, can only be achieved by the independent actions of the organized toilers against the employing class." . . . . "The Socialist party has confidence that only a revolutionary Socialist party can in reality champion the immediate and ultimate needs of the toilers."

Thus, the Minnesota Socialist party has turned over a new leaf. Unflinchingly it paints the Farmer-Labor party in its true colors. It exposes the illusions of reformism. It calls upon the workers to build the Socialist party as the sole instrument of their emancipation. Further, the Socialist party declares its independence of the Farmer-Labor party.

"The Socialist party can be responsible only for members of its own organization; that is Socialists who accept the revolutionary program and are disciplined fighters in the every day struggle of the toilers. Thus we can accept no responsibility for those elected on a Farmer-Labor ticket. On the contrary, in view of the program and record of the Farmer-Labor party, we urge the greatest amount of vigilance in compelling these officials to carry out their election pledges for the defense of civil liberties and for the passage of social legislation."

Critical Support

It would be wrong to conclude from this that the logical thing for the Minnesota S.P. to do would be to run a full slate of candidates against the F.L.P. This may be impeccable logic in the abstract; but it has nothing to do with the dynamics of class forces. The S.P. criticizes the F.L.P. in unmitigated terms, and yet at the same time it gives it support. "The Socialist party," declares the platform, "is not placing a full slate in the field this year against the Farmer-Labor party. While we conduct an independent election campaign, and have no relations with the Farmer-Labor party, we urge you to vote for Farmer-Labor candidates where no Socialist candidate appears on the ballot." (The S.P. is running a single candidate, for Secretary of State.) The S.P. gives the F.L.P. every opportunity to come to office and prove to the workers that the S.P. is right. At the same time it signalizes its independence by running a candidate for minor office. It does this not because it is weak, rather the S.P. is weak today (in comparison to the F.L.P.) because of its own past mistakes and because the great mass of the workers still believe in the possibility of securing reforms through the reformist parties. These workers will not change their opinions merely as a result of agitation alone. Agitation will help. But they need to go through the experience with reformism. The object of the Socialist party should be to abbreviate as much as possible this stage in the development of the working class. Having gone through this experience, these masses will all the more readily believe in the correctness of the socialist analysis. But there is every indication that vast sections of the working class will move almost directly from their present political backwardness to a revolutionary position. The best guarantee that this will be the case is the organization of the revolutionary vanguard, day in and day out!

THE APPEAL-A SEMI-MONTHLY?

IN ONE of the previous issues we hesitatingly suggested that possibly in the distant future the APPEAL will blossom out as a semi-monthly. Far sooner than any one of us expected has the almost absolute necessity of issuing the APPEAL twice instead of once a month been brought close to us. Events-terrifically important events—are transpiring daily. They have to be analyzed for the advanced workers. No other organ exists for such an analysis. And a monthly is not sufficient.

Due to the fact that we received many important articles dealing with problems of international importance we deemed it advisable to make this issue a SPECIAL INTERNATIONAL ISSUE. But that leaves us with a lot of unpublished material treating of important "home" problems. We have therefore decided to print another issue of the APPEAL in the middle of October.

For the month of October, the APPEAL becomes a semi-monthly. Shall we continue publishing it twice a month?

If we judge by the number of articles submitted we should. If we judge by the enthusiasm of the readers we should. We have to print one thousand more copies of this issue than of the last issue. The letters that we receive ordering increased bundles are evidence of that enthusiasm.

But if we judge by the monetary contributions . . . . ah, there's the rub. Every copy of the APPEAL that we send out represents a loss which must be made up through contributions. We need two hundred comrades who will pledge an average of one dollar every month in order to assure the publication of the APPEAL twice a month. This should not be difficult.

At any rate be prepared for an extra issue by the 15th of October. Send your subs and orders immediately.

* * * *

Here are some comments from comrades coming from different parts of the country. From Louisville, Ky. HERBERT WEINBERGER writes: "it is with sincere pleasure that I subscribe to the SOCIALIST APPEAL, the only revolutionary Marxist publication in America worthy of support . . . . As a former member of the C.P. and a present member of the S.P. I and my comrades in Louisville (who have recently left the C.P.) are proud to support the APPEAL. We will build the APPEAL and help build a strong revolutionary S.P."

Comrade T. LEONARD from Boston wants his bundle order increased to 200 copies. Minneapolis started with ten copies and now has jumped to one hundred. JOHN NEWTON THURBER, Cleveland organizer, writes: "I suppose it is improper for a contributor to comment on the issue in which his work appears, but I do feel that the scope of the contributions this time is such that the APPEAL will surely make a wide appeal this time."

and now we await both criticism and . . . . **pledges.**

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